

**US History II**  
**Summer Reading Assignment**  
***Between the World and Me***

Name:  
Date:  
Section:

In preparation for their study of US history, all rising juniors are required to read *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. The book, styled as a letter to Coates' son Samori, explores Coates' thoughts on the history and future of black life in the United States. Coates engages with both American history and his personal experience in this powerful critique of the "American dream."

As you read the book, you must complete four journal entries, described in detail below. These journal entries are due at the start of class on the first day of school. They may be typed and printed, neatly handwritten, or shared electronically with [elam@ccscfiles.org](mailto:elam@ccscfiles.org). The journals will be graded as a minor assessment.

### **Journal Requirements**

As you read, you should complete three journals, one for each of the following sections:

- Part 1 (pp. 3-71)
- Part 2 (pp. 73-132)
- Part 3 (pp. 133-152)

Each of these three journal assignments should include the following components:

- Context (two per journal)
  - Summarize the two most significant events in each section that helps you understand the context of black life in the United States during Coates' life.
  - Explain how each event helps you understand the historical context of the book.
  - Each summary-explanation pair should be at least five sentences long.
- Reactions and connections (two per journal)
  - Quote two important passages from this section that struck you.
  - Explain in at least five sentences why you found each quote so compelling.

After you finish the book, you should complete a final journal entry. In the final entry, you should answer, in three to five paragraphs, this question:

Many people believe that American history has been a story of constant progress towards equality for African Americans and other historically oppressed groups. (In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.") How would Coates react to this statement? Do you agree with Coates? Why or why not?

### **Honors Option**

To earn credit towards one honors assignment for the fall semester in US History II, you should complete the same assignment for Charles Cobb's *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible*, in addition to reading *Between the World and Me*.

The three sections for the first three journals are:

- Part 1: Introduction, Prologue, and Chapters 1-2
- Part 2: Chapters 2, 3, and 4
- Part 3: Chapters 5 and 6, Epilogue, and Afterword

The prompt for the final journal is:

What is the role of armed self-defense in creating social change? To what extent are we justified in demanding that social movements be completely nonviolent?